

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 9, 2015

Commissioner R. Gil Kerlikowske
Customs and Border Protection
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20229

RE: Request for Additional Support in the Port of Pittsburgh

Commissioner Kerlikowske:

During recent meetings with business and community leaders in Western and Central Pennsylvania, it has come to our attention that a lack of manpower at the Pittsburgh Customs and Border Protection (CBP) office is negatively impacting trade and economic development efforts in this important part of the Commonwealth.

From a peak of twenty-five officers in 2002, the Port of Pittsburgh now employs only nine full-time officers, which is insufficient for the growing volume of commerce and direct international travel that they are required to support. **Accordingly, we request that CBP allocate at least two additional officers for Pittsburgh as soon as possible and that CPB monitor these staffing levels moving forward to ensure consistency with those of other ports with similar volume and mission.**

The main requirement for CBP manpower in Pittsburgh stems from direct international passenger traffic through the Pittsburgh International Airport. Since 2008, such traffic has increased by seventy-six percent and, at the current rate, will reach more than 70,000 passengers this year. During that same time period, the number of full-time CBP officers in Pittsburgh has fallen from fifteen to nine. Other factors that also dictate a higher required staffing level at the Pittsburgh CBP office include:

- Businesses at the Pittsburgh International Airport have requested support for night and weekend international flights. In response to the loss of manpower and restrictions on overtime, such support has been eliminated, which interferes with economic development efforts at the airport.
- Pittsburgh is a diversion destination for international flights when foul weather curtail landing slots at major airports on the east coast. Pittsburgh CBP has little flexibility in accommodating such activity.
- Pittsburgh CBP does not have a permanent office, and its temporary office is behind the airport security perimeter, inaccessible to the public. This stretches the staff to

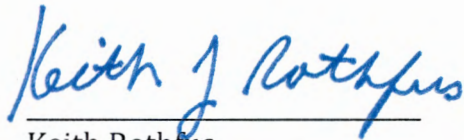
provide at least limited public access to CBP personnel in another location.

- The addition of the Global Entry program appears to consume at least one full-time officer, for which no accommodation was made to an already thin staff.
- Elimination in 2013 of the Container Examination Station at Pittsburgh means officers now have to travel to off-site examination locations, consuming more manpower for each exam.

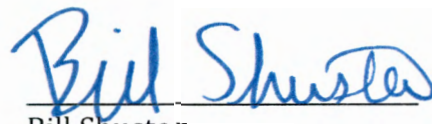
While we certainly appreciate that difficult choices often must be made in times of tight budget constraints, we are also mindful of the vital mission that CBP serves in support of cargo security, commerce, and international tourism. These needs have been steadily increasing in Western and Central Pennsylvania, and we believe that a minimum of twelve CBP officers is both needed and warranted in the Pittsburgh office to facilitate such growth.

We appreciate your prompt attention to this request and look forward to continuing to work with CBP to address the security and economic development needs of the Commonwealth. Please feel free to contact our offices should you have any questions.

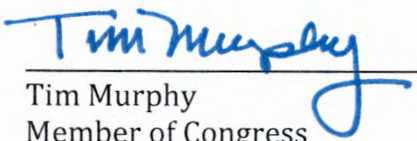
Sincerely,



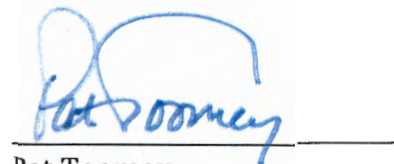
Keith Rothfus
Member of Congress



Bill Shuster
Member of Congress



Tim Murphy
Member of Congress



Pat Toomey
United States Senator

cc: Todd C. Owen, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Field Operations
Michael J. Yeager, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Congressional Affairs